



**MISSOURI
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

BOB HOLDEN
GOVERNOR

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October 8, 2003

Linda Lewis, Regional Administrator
Department of Health and Human Services
Federal Building
601 East 12th, Room 276
Kansas City, Missouri 64106

Dear Ms. Lewis:

I am pleased to submit Missouri's Statewide Assessment for the Child and Family Services Review. This statewide assessment has identified many strengths and challenges for Missouri's programs for children and families. We engaged stakeholders, sought information from various review committees and extracted information from multiple surveys in the preparation of this statewide assessment. We welcomed the opportunity to assess our child welfare system.

Missouri's on-site review during the week of December 8, 2003, will permit examination of practices and outcomes across three different localities, specifically St. Louis County, the largest populated county per census is a suburban area with a wealth of resources on the eastern side of the state; Jackson County, an urban and rural county facing challenges similar to other urban areas and is located on the western side of the state; and Jasper County, representing a more rural area located in the southwestern corner of state. We fully anticipate strengths as well as challenges will emerge from this review.

The Children's Division benefits from a very dedicated staff, statewide, who are committed to preserving the safety and well-being of the children in Missouri. This is a time of great change in the child welfare system, and with that change there are opportunities for improvement. We welcome the opportunity to learn from our findings and work closely with our federal partners.

Sincerely,

Frederic M. Simmens
Director
Children's Division